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"And if they had the wall of fire round Ireland, to keep in them that snap their fingers at the priests when they get to America," said Jem, "wouldn't they have a good bit of fire in the middle of Ireland too, for the boys that won't mind the priests at home?"

"Well it's a nice Patrick's Purgatory it would be, more nor even St. Patrick thought of," said Pat, "if Father John, and Father Reardon got their way. But it's not come to that yet anyway."

"I'm in dread it's too hot for them, that will turn," said Jem.

"Well, Jem," said Pat, "it will be worse yet for them that is ashamed of Christ, and that won't confess him with the mouth. Anyway that is stuck in me, and I can't be without some church; and I'll have to find one that will let me confess Christ and his words: that's the church for me, Jem, and maybe I'll find it better here nor in America. My mind's made up anyway, and if I'm beat, sure I can go to America then as well as now; and not feel then that I'm skulking out of it, like a man that is ashamed of Christ."

So if we should hear anything more of poor Pat's future history, our readers may like to know it, as well as we. For there are clear heads, and some brave hearts too, among the poor people of Ireland; and the humblest of them is worth caring about. Such men may be scarce in Ireland before long: and it concerns us all, that Ireland should not be too hot for them to stay in.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

To diminish the chance of disappointment, all letters should be forwarded to the office by the first day of the month.

All letters to be addressed to the Editor, 9, Upper Sackville-st.

Contributors of £1 per annum will be furnished with six copies, any of which will be forwarded, as directed, to nominees of the subscriber. Any one receiving any number of the journal which has not been paid for or ordered by himself, will not be charged for it, and may assume that it has been paid for by a subscriber.

The Catholic Layman.

DUBLIN, OCTOBER 17, 1855.

EVERY period of the world's history has its own peculiar marks and characteristics; and it may be said, without fear of contradiction, that our's is pre-eminently an age of inquiry. There is scarcely any question, physical or moral, which is not, from time to time, brought under investigation; and, to any person who is sincerely anxious for the promotion of truth, it is a subject of the deepest interest to mark the growth of enlightened views, and the dying-out of antiquated prejudices, both at home and abroad. And this interest must be obviously increased, in proportion to the intrinsic importance of the question which gives rise to such gratifying results.

Our readers, we trust, scarcely need to be reminded that, from the commencement of this Journal, we have always laboured, to the best of our ability, to impress upon our fellow-countrymen the paramount duty which devolved upon them, as intelligent men and as Christians, to seek out truth, and especially religious truth, for themselves. We have urged them to disregard the impediments and restrictions with which interested persons, whether priests or laymen, would seek to surround them; and we have called upon them to assert and practice the right of free inquiry upon the most important of all subjects which could concern them as immortal beings. We felt thoroughly persuaded that, in the end, the cause of religious truth could never suffer from such investigation, conducted in a fair and candid spirit. It is falsehood, and falsehood alone, which has any cause to shun the light.

It is not now our purpose to dwell on the success which has attended our efforts—a success, we are rejoiced to say, in many instances far beyond our expectations. We merely advert to the subject, for the purpose of drawing the attention of our readers to the striking confirmation of the soundness of our views, which has lately been presented in a quarter where it might have been least expected—namely, in the Cortes, or Parliament of Spain.

Spain, as our readers are aware is a thoroughly Roman Catholic country; perhaps, in some respects more thoroughly Romanist than even Italy itself. It was for many centuries the chosen seat of the Inquisition; and the fearful cruelties perpetrated on all persons who were even suspected of heresy have often been detailed in all their hideous enormity. The animosity of the priests and inquisitors extended even beyond the grave. If a person not of the Romish communion died in Spain, no funeral rites could be performed over his remains. His family were obliged to convey the body privately and by stealth to the place of interment, and deposit it in the ground without prayer or ceremony of any kind. A remarkable instance of this intolerant bigotry occurred some few years ago, and drew forth a spirited remonstrance from Lord Howden, the English ambassador, addressed to the Spanish Government: and it was said in the newspapers at that time, that if the Duke of Wellington, who had rescued Spain from French domination, had had the misfortune to die in the country which he delivered, his body, according to law, would have been treated worse than that of a common malefactor, and buried in the ground like a dog.

In such a country, where all the power and influence of the Government were directed to the promotion and support of the Roman Catholic faith, the obstacles to enlightened discussion might, at first sight, appear almost insurmountable. We might expect that scarcely any person would have the boldness, in the face of so much intolerance, to raise his voice in defence of free inquiry and religious liberty. Such an event has happened, however (as we learn from the public papers), in the course of the last few months*; and the cry has been raised, not in an obscure corner of the country, but in Madrid itself, in the highest deliberative assembly of Spain. How true it is, that all the efforts of priestly domination can never permanently succeed in stifling the earnest longing of the human mind for truth and freedom! The Romish clergy may keep a country in darkness and bondage for centuries; but sooner or later, in spite of all their precautions, some rays of light will break in.

The man who had the courage and resolution to act as we have described was the deputy from Barcelona, Don Raphael Degollado. A motion had been made in the Cortes, to the effect that any person who, from religious conviction, had ceased to belong to the Roman Catholic Church in Spain, might be at liberty to embrace another creed. This measure, the very first step in the path of religious toleration, was, as might be expected, violently opposed by the priestly party and their advocates; and it was in answer to them that Don Raphael Degollado delivered the bold and manly speech to which we have adverted. We request the attention of our Roman Catholic readers to the arguments which he employed. They have been frequently advanced in our pages; but, perhaps, they may come home with more force to some minds, from the recollection of the fact that the speaker is, and has been, a sincere member of the Roman Catholic Church. In reading the accounts of the bitter persecution to which our own poor countrymen are often exposed, who have had the courage to follow the dictates of their conscience, and leave the Church of Rome, we often felt that it would be well if all Romanists in Ireland acted on the fair and honest principles which the deputy from Barcelona so truthfully describes:—

"I come here," said he, "to defend toleration upon strictly religious grounds. Intolerance and exclusiveness are directly contrary to the Christian religion. If the gates of hell are not to prevail against the Word of God, why this puerile, this impious fear that injury could be done by another religion to the religion of Christ? This insulting

fear is a negative—at the least, a doubt—of the truth of prophecy; and from doubt to infidelity is but one step. He who uses constraint, whether physical or moral, to secure the fulfilment of prophecy, can have no faith in it. The partisans of intolerance ignore the force of truth.—Truth has in itself an irresistible force, it is as the light; our lips cannot deny its presence when our eyes behold it."

He defends himself ably from the charge of being influenced by indifference or hostility to religion, in advocating the cause of religious toleration:—

"My conscience could never know peace were I to refrain from telling you all I feel, all I think on this momentous subject. Let it not be thought, either within these walls or outside of them, that when I come here to defend religious liberty, I do so as an infidel, or a sceptic, or an indifferent. All these I have formerly been. I have been even a fanatic—a violent fanatic; but, by the grace of God, I have been enabled to escape those dangerous quicksands, where mere human reason too often makes shipwreck. And it is because I observe in this country the rapid progress of incredulity, hypocrisy, and a revolting cynicism, that I so ardently desire the triumph of religious liberty, which alone can arrest this fatal progress."

We pause in our extracts for a moment, in order to call attention to the picture of the state of morals and religion in Spain, drawn by an unimpeachable witness, the chosen representative of the important town of Barcelona. He, a Spanish gentleman, was addressing an assembly of Spaniards upon a question of momentous social importance; and he would have exposed himself to instant contradiction if his sentiments and statements were false or exaggerated. And in what terms does he describe the social condition of his countrymen? The picture is indeed a gloomy one. "There is," he declares, "a rapid and fatal progress of incredulity, hypocrisy, and revolting cynicism;" which latter word may be taken to imply a kind of savage, unsocial selfishness of character. This, then, is the state to which the teaching of the Church of Rome has reduced one of the finest countries in Europe. Romanism can throw the blame on no other quarter. For several centuries she has had the entire teaching of the Spaniards in her own hands. Not only religious liberty, but even the most trifling toleration, was sternly refused to any other persons or teachers, save her own. Have we not a right, then, to judge of the truth of her system by its fruits? She has made the Spaniards unbelievers and hypocrites; she set before them, under the garb of Christianity, a tissue of doctrines which they could not believe, and then compelled them, by persecution, to conceal their unbelief under the mask of hypocrisy. We greatly fear that there are many other Roman Catholic countries to which such a melancholy description would too truly apply.

To return, however, to the speech of the deputy from Barcelona. He argues, in forcible terms, against the superstitious dread of toleration which some sincere Romanists might possibly entertain:—

"Of all religions," he asks, "which is that which must appear to us to have the firmest faith in the truth of her dogmas?—that which shuts herself up, as it were, in an impenetrable enclosure, discusses nothing, tolerates nothing, and persecutes all outside her pale? Or is it that religion which discusses and which tolerates the free exercise of other forms of worship? Is it Catholic Spain, which stifles in her bosom, by every possible means, religious liberty? or Protestant Norway, who opens her doors to Jews and Catholics, whom she had for so long a period repulsed? Or Protestant England, who extends her toleration even to permitting the establishment of colleges of Jesuits, the most implacable enemies of the Reformation?"

We may observe, in passing, that the policy adopted by the Church of Rome nearer home appears to resemble very closely that which characterises her conduct in Spain. She shuts herself up, as far as she can, in an impenetrable enclosure. She steadily sets her face against discussion of any kind. She stifles religious liberty by every possible means; and we are constrained to add, that in those parts of Ireland where the balance of numbers is on her side, the lawless violence of the mob is not unfrequently employed, in order to check, by terror and in-

* Vide the Daily Express of Thursday, the 19th of July last.

timidation, the progress of Scriptural inquiry, which the Romish priests are unwilling openly to oppose.

The Spanish orator next brings forward a moral argument for free discussion, which we have frequently urged ourselves, but which we are glad once more to reproduce, in the words of an enlightened Roman Catholic:—

"If," argues the Catalonian deputy, "persons belonging to other communions are in error, instead of repulsing them, ought we not rather to draw them towards us by tenderness and love? Can they regard us with a favourable eye when we persecute them—when we calumniate them? If souls are led astray by error, permit discussion. Truth will triumph, sooner or later. Those whom we shall be unable to convince by our words, let us attract by our works, by example, by the practice of evangelical virtues—the most effectual, the most rare of all propagandas."

Our readers may well ask, can this be a voice from Spain, the land of the stake and the rack, the country of the Inquisition and the *auto da fé*? We will not now stop to inquire into the causes which have produced this revolution of feeling in the Spanish mind; but we cannot avoid calling attention to the simple but pregnant words in which Don Raphael Degollado has advocated the freedom of religious inquiry. "*If souls are led astray by error, permit discussion. Truth will triumph, sooner or later.*" This is the principle which we ourselves put forward, in one of the early numbers of this Journal, as the guide and motive of our labours; and it affords us unfeigned pleasure to find it re-echoed from the midst of the parliament of Spain. We may be permitted to add, that those persons, whosoever they are, who believe their countrymen to be in religious error, and yet endeavour to stifle free inquiry, exhibit a sad want of Christian love for the souls whom they believe to be led astray.

We can afford space but for one or two extracts more. The Spanish orator proceeds to notice and to refute the common objection, that religious unity would be endangered if free religious discussion were permitted:—

"Religious unity, so earnestly called for by all, is by myself as anxiously desired as by any; but my wish is, that it should be real, not counterfeit, like that which we already seem to possess. If by unity we are to understand external unity in worship and observances, that unity already exists, since we are not permitted to observe any form of worship save that alone of the Catholic Church. But if we are to understand true unity to be that of doctrines and creeds, then the communion must be perfectly aware that such unity has no existence. It knows, also, that there are not wanting Spaniards who long to profess a different religion; that infidelity and indifference have their partisans; that from their very pulpits the clergy loudly complain of this; and that numbers of Catholics are as far removed from gospel truth as a Mahometan could possibly be;—so that to maintain that religious unity exists is willingly to perpetuate a lie, which deceives no one."

These remarkable words, we must remind our readers, are not ours, but those of a Roman Catholic—the chosen deputy of one of the most important towns in Spain. The unity of the Church, we must remember, is the cardinal doctrine of the Romish Church. In order to preserve this cherished dogma, every person must surrender his private judgment; every individual opinion must give way, it is said, to the voice of the universal Church. Well, the Church of Rome has, for many centuries, had her own way in Spain. We have often been told that Spain is the chosen seat of Catholicity. The very title of the Spanish Monarch is "*Sua Majesta Catolica*."—"Her Catholic Majesty." And, now, what is the result? Let us hear the account given by a most competent and unexceptionable witness. He tells us that "it is not a real, but a counterfeit unity;" that "the true unity of doctrines and creeds has no existence;" that "there are not wanting Spaniards who long to profess a different religion, and that numbers of Catholics are as far removed from gospel truth as a Mahometan could possibly be!" After this avowal, we trust we shall hear no more from Romish Controversialists of differences of opinion in the Protestant Church.

Protestants in general are at least free from the charge of professing a religion which they do not believe. In the midst of much outward disagreement, we rejoice to think that there exists among Protestant Churches a real inward unity of doctrine and belief of the great fundamental truths of the gospel, without which all external professions of unity are but vain and nugatory.

In the Church of Rome, on the other hand, the substance is sacrificed to the shadow; the inward reality to the outward form. She has crushed the right of private judgment so long, that at last, thinking men are obliged to take refuge in hypocrisy and infidelity. In order to secure the semblance of an external unity, she prohibits all free discussion wherever she has the power; and she at length flatters herself that she has gained her object, when, in truth, the only unity which exists in her communion resembles the sameness and uniformity of colour which takes place everywhere at night, when light is entirely withdrawn. The rising of the morning sun brings the real state of things into view.

We shall add but one extract more:—

"The question of liberty of conscience has been for nearly half a century knocking at our gates, and offering itself to every serious mind for solution, which in every other civilized nation it has found. But what is the point in discussion? Is it to constrain Catholics to abjure their faith, in order to embrace another? Certainly not; but that we should come to the decision, that when any one ceases here in Spain, as elsewhere, to have faith in the Catholic religion, such person should have power to embrace another. If more than this be demanded, it is not to uphold religion, but the theocracy—a theocracy not the government of men by God, but man taking advantage of his fellow man, and that by no honest means."

This is the liberty which we demand for our fellow-countrymen at home. All we ask is, that when any Irishman ceases to have faith in the Roman Catholic religion, he should be left at liberty to embrace another, undeterred by the threat of popular violence or priestly intimidation. This liberty we shall continue to advocate temperately but firmly; and if any persons set themselves to oppose this freedom of action on the part of their neighbours, we will only say of them, in the words of the Spanish orator, that they are "men taking advantage of their fellow men, and that by no honest means."

TO SUBSCRIBERS.

In consequence of the considerable number of Subscriptions still unpaid, the publisher will, henceforward, be obliged to discontinue the paper to such *Subscribers* as are in arrear. A Blue Cover will, it is hoped, be taken as a sufficient notification. We have already more than once explained the difficulty of making special applications.

Correspondence.

THE RULES OF CHURCH UNITY.

ANSWER TO JOHN MILLER.

(Continued from our last number.)

We published, in our last number, a letter from John Miller, in which he tried to prove that the spouse of Christ, the Church which is without spot or blemish, needs must be the Church of Rome.

John Miller rightly thinks that no other Church on earth is without spot or blemish, and therefore he jumped to the conclusion that the Church of Rome must be so.

But as evil members were spots in the Church in the days of St. Jude (Jude, verse 12), so they must be now in the Church of Rome.

And since there is, therefore, no Church on earth without spot, that heavenly spouse must be "the Church of the firstborn which are written in heaven." (Hebrew, xii. 23.)

All the firstborn among the Jews belonged especially to God (Numbers, viii. 17). "The Church of the firstborn" is, therefore, composed only of those who are indeed the children of God, whose names are written in heaven.

This only is the Church without spot or blemish.

But Christ has also constituted his Church as a visible society in the world; this Church is so far from being "without spot" that it is compared to a net cast into the sea, which gathered both good fish and bad:

and so it shall be to the end of the world (Matthew, xiii. 47—49.)

For the Church so spotted and blemished in this present state, Christ and his apostles have given rules in Scripture, which all faithful Christians are bound to observe.

We promised to point out those rules in this number, and we now proceed to do so.

Our Saviour has declared HIS WILL, that his Church should be one unbroken and undivided body.

He has declared this in the most solemn manner, by praying to His Father that it might be one.

"Neither pray I for these alone (the apostles), but for them also which shall believe in me through their word, THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that THEY also may be ONE in us" (John, xvii. 20, 21).

We believe that this prayer was especially intended of the VISIBLE communion of Christ's people on earth; because our Lord goes on immediately to declare why He desired and prayed for this unity; "That THE WORLD may believe that Thou hast sent me." It was, therefore, a unity which "THE WORLD" could see—that is, a VISIBLE unity—which Christ prayed for.

It is true such a unity has been but partially accomplished.

Our Lord prayed for the apostles—"I pray for them" (verse 9), yet Judas fell.

Our Lord prayed "for them also which should believe on him through their word" (verse 20), yet St. Paul writing "unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints" (1 Cor. i. 2), says he hears that there are divisions or schisms among them (Ch. i. 10 and 11, xi. 18.)

And in most ages since, there have been divisions.

"It must needs be that offences come, but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh" (Matthew xviii. 7.)

So also there must needs be divisions; yet Christians should strive to be clear of the sin of division.

The apostles of Christ have left rules in the Church which, if observed, would accomplish that visible unity for which Christ prayed.

St. Paul has left this rule—"Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them (Rom. xvi. 17.)"

He does not say "those who separate themselves," but "those who cause separations" (*διχοστασίας ποιοῦντας*); it is those who cause the division, who are guilty of the offence.

St. Paul says also to the Church at Corinth, "I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you." And he forbids any one to say, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas" (that is, of St. Peter), because these things lead to divisions (1 Cor. i. 10, 12.)

To the Hebrews—that is, the converted Jews—St. Paul says (Hebrews xiii.)—"Remember your rulers who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith imitate, considering the ending of the life they led." (verse 7.)

And to this he adds (verses 8, 9) "Jesus Christ (is) the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines."

At the seventeenth verse he says to them "obey your rulers and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls as they that must give account."

Verse seven exhorts them to remember St. James, their first bishop, and others who had lately suffered martyrdom with him, and to imitate their faith so gloriously proved.

Verses eight and nine remind them that as Jesus Christ can never change, no new or strange doctrine besides what St. James taught could ever be admitted into the Church.

Verse seventeen exhorts them to be obedient to Symeon, who succeeded St. James, and those who were then labouring with him, because the watching for their souls was committed to them. But this does not mean that if Symeon or his successors should bring in a new doctrine the people were bound to receive it, for the same St. Paul says, "If ANY MAN preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. i. 9.).—And St. Jude exhorts all Christians that they "should earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints" (verse 3.)

The faith itself, "ONCE DELIVERED," is therefore the great thing. The succession of prelates and priests, the very Church itself, was instituted to support that faith once delivered. If Prelates or Churches set themselves to alter or corrupt that faith, they betray the very object for which they were created; they so far forfeit the authority of their office; for the authority which God gives, is no authority when turned against Him; and no man is to follow or obey them in such a course.

The unchangeability of the faith lies at the root of all unity. For men cannot be united for an object, unless the object itself be fixed and settled. If the faith itself be a shifting thing which men can change, then change

* This is the exact meaning of the original. (*την ἐκβασιον τῆς ἀναστροφῆς*).